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10th December, 1962

Good Evening,

The Premier, Sir Thomas Playford is slipping a little. On past form, with a by-election in the offing, one could have expected him to make a confident announcement of some great new project for the development of the area concerned.

Before the Frane by-election, you will recall, he announced that within a fortnight the standardisation of Broken Hill to Port Pirie railway line would be commenced and 850 men would be engaged for some years for the purpose. That was in November, 1960. To date none of the men have been engaged and no agreement on the project has been reached with the Commonwealth.

So when the Premier came to make the opening speech in the by-election campaign for Mt. Gambier, we all expected something opposite, fanciful and grandiose to be trotted forth. We were disappointed. The Premier's fertile imagination failed him this time and he was constrained to admit that the negotiations for the pulp mills which he had previously announced would be established at Mount Gambier were slipping back. As this would dampen down the first of hope he had kindled in the breasts of Mt. Gambier residents, he felt he must excuse himself. The whole trouble was, he said, that he had been unable to get away and go to Canada to clinch the deal because of the political situation in South Australia.

Now, that of course was nonsense. The Labor Party has always shown itself willing to facilitate any visit interstate or overseas by the Premier where it is shown to us to be a matter of vital importance to the State. If he needed to go he could have gone. He cannot, on that score, excuse the fact that he announced the pulp mill as certain of establishment and must now admit he doesn't know when it will or even if it will ever come.

Nobody can be very confident of the results of overseas trips by the Premier, however. In the last Parliament he made

a rush trip to the U.S.A. which was the subject of headlined predictions for weeks, and achieved precisely nothing. True he did subsequently say that S.A. was going to get a great new industry too hush hush to mention. Unfortunately it has remained unmentionable ever since.

Mt. Gambier residents, like others in the South East are doubtless more than tired of having their hopes for future development given the yo-yo treatment by Sir Thomas. Let's just select a few of his promised great projects for the South East, if we took the whole State I would detain you for far longer than the time of this session.

Do you remember the S.E. deep-sea port? It became quite a phenomenon that promise. It was revived, killed off, exhumed, murdered once more, disinterred, reburied with such extraordinary facility that the Premier seemed to have cast himself for a multiplicity of roles, creator, exterminator, gravedigger, reviver, third murderer all rolled into one. The project, with most extraordinary feats of legerdemain was promised to almost every imaginable and unimaginable site in the South East with the sole exception of the Blue Lake. But now, alas, its really dead and you and I hear of it no more.

Then there was the atomic power plant. Three times it was promised to Lake Leske - and now the Premier admits there is no likelihood of proceeding with it.

Then there was the Haraccorte Heatworks that is now similarly in the limbo of forgotten things.

In fact the only way we will get balanced development in the S.E. is by undertaking it as a community responsibility as was proved with the forestry industry when the Gun Labor Government made the plantings of the State Forests. Mt. Gambier people are well able to distinguish that great achievement from the vague posturings and empty promises which, under the present Government have left ~~them~~ their hope bereft.